DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 166 908 EC 113 622

AUTHOR	Lawrence, James
TITLE	Project Skill: Strategies and Techniques: Project on the Employment of Handicapped Persons in State Government Positions. R & D Monograph 54.
INSTITUTION	Employment and Training Administration (DOL), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	78
GRANT	DL-21-55-74-30
NOTE	24p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (Stock No. 029-000-00330-1)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educable Mentally Handicapped; *Emotionally Disturbed; *Employment; Employment Opportunities; Employment Programs; Government Employees; Job Development; Job Placement; Mentally Handicapped; *State Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Project Skill

ABSTRACT

The booklet describes the accomplishments of Project Skill, an approach to providing employment in Wisconsin civil service positions for mildly mentally retarded or restored emotionally disturbed persons. In addition to an historical review of the project, the report focuses on the following aspects (subtopics in parentheses): job development (gaining support and cementing the commitment); recruitment and intake (prescreening interview and administration of a civil service examination); and training (specific training programs and job placement follow through). Concluding comments suggest that Wisconsin's success can be replicated in other states. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Project Skill: Strategies and Techniques

Project on the Employment of Handicapped Persons in State Government Positions

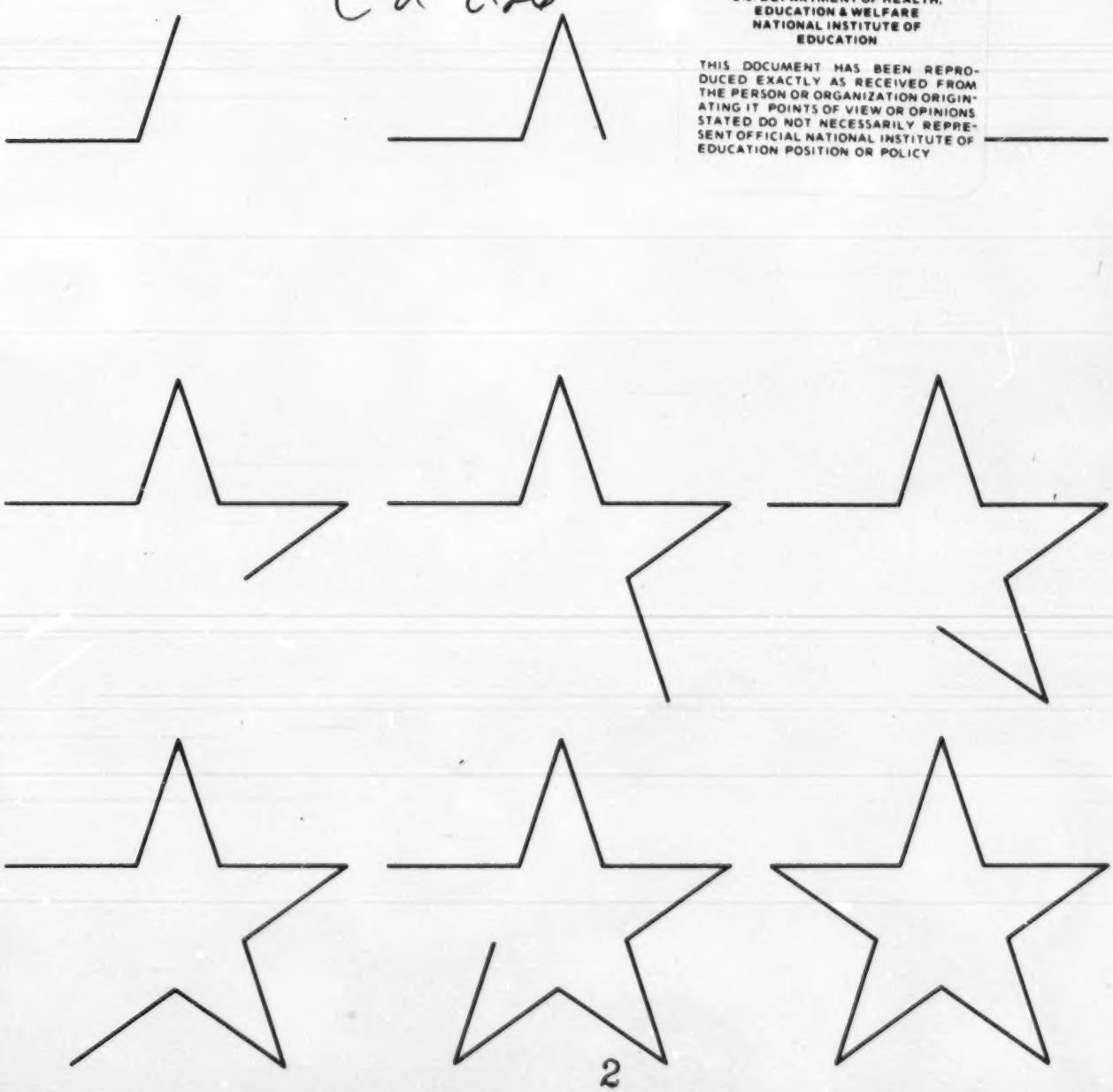
R&D Monograph 54

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration

1/15/79
SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE
The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: EC CE
In our judgement, this document is also of interest to the clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED166904



EC113622

Material contained in this publication is in the public domain and may be reproduced, fully or partially, without permission of the Federal Government. Source credit is requested but not required.

Project Skill: Strategies and Techniques

013477

Project on the Employment of Handicapped Persons in State Government Positions

R&D Monograph 54

U.S. Department of Labor
Ray Marshall, Secretary

Employment and Training Administration
Ernest G. Green
Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training
1978

This report on a demonstration project was prepared under Grant Number 21-55-74-30 from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, under the authority of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973. Researchers undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express their own judgment. Interpretations or viewpoints stated in this document do not necessarily represent the official position or policy of the Department of Labor. The project which produced this report is directed by Carol Lobes, State Bureau of Human Resource Services, Wisconsin Department of Administration. The author of this report is James Lawrence.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

Stock No. 029-000-00330-1

PREFACE

This manual describes the methods and procedures that Project Skill has developed since its beginning in 1974 and provides a sourcebook of ideas for those who might be interested in adapting this experience within their own civil service systems. The manual can be used in two ways:

1. As a guide to decisionmakers who wish to explore instituting a similar effort geared to their particular needs.

2. As a guide for practitioners involved in similar employment programs.

Project Skill also serves as a model for use as a basis for a program that could be adapted to local needs.

CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
Historical Perspective	1
Project Structure	2
Results	3
JOB DEVELOPMENT	5
Gaining Support	5
Tools, Techniques, and Selling Points	5
Cementing the Commitment	6
RECRUITMENT AND INTAKE	9
Recruitment	9
Prescreening	9
Civil Service Examination	10
Final Selection and Feedback	11
TRAINING	13
Purpose of Training	13
Orientation/Training	13
Programs, Training Plans, and Reports	16
Job Placement Followthrough	17
CONCLUSION	19

INTRODUCTION

Historical Perspective

Project Skill was developed in response to a concern for expanding the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities. As growing attention focused on this population as a virtually untapped manpower resource, professional rehabilitation personnel as well as parents and the individuals themselves became more vocal about the lack of transitional training and adjustment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Project Skill was conceived in order to test the feasibility of one approach to providing employment for this population. The focus of attention was narrowed to persons either mildly mentally retarded or restored emotionally disturbed.

Funded through the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Research and Development and operated by the State of Wisconsin, the project began on April 15, 1974. This project was originally slated as a 2-year demonstration program. Its specific target was to define and fill 94 permanent entry-level, Wisconsin State civil service positions, while providing transitional training, adjustment, and supportive services to each project participant and employer.

The initial core concerns of Project Skill were to answer the following questions:

1. Is competitive employment and economic independence more attainable when training and work adjustment activities are part of an employer's system?

2. Can a civil service system adapt to the employment needs of less severe mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed persons?

3. Is the rehabilitation process enhanced when the client is being trained for a specific available job in a regular work setting at the same wages and privileges as persons who are not handicapped?

The project was clearly one of the first of its kind in the Nation; letters of inquiry grew in volume over time and eventually came from States spanning border to border and coast to coast. The intensity and diversity of outside interest was so great that, 1 year later, the Department of Labor developed a 15-minute film that detailed significant aspects of Project Skill's operation. This became an invaluable tool (along with the First Year and Interim Reports) for disseminating functional information about the program.

The implementation of Project Skill has resulted in a variety of outcomes:

1. The project's successful placement of over 100 persons into permanent State jobs resulted in the commitment by the State of Wisconsin (Departments of Health and Social Services and Administration cooperatively) of sufficient State revenue resources to continue Project Skill as an ongoing program and expand the focus of effort to persons of all disabilities, in addition to persons who are mentally or emotionally handicapped.

2. A model dissemination effort that was formally launched by a 5-State conference that lasted 2 days in mid-September 1976. This conference is being followed up by on-site staff visits to each interested State capital to meet with appropriate agency and community personnel to work out implementation strategy.

3. A special project funded by the Wisconsin Governor's Manpower Office to extend Project Skill to cities and counties, using Comprehensive Employment and Training Act funds to subsidize participant salaries. Formal, cooperative agreements were developed with Job Service, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and local Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities boards. The project has functioned for 1 1/2 years in the balance-of-State area (49 counties). The cooperative agreements have yielded the most effective vehicle for assuring services to trainees over a vast geographical area. The next year's efforts involve a similar effort with regard to the State's nine prime sponsors.

4. A 1-year Intergovernmental Personnel Act grant to implement a focused affirmative action effort within the State system for persons who are handicapped. The end product of this project will be twofold—a data system that will allow tracking and statistical analysis of numbers of applicants and employees who are handicapped; and a training package for agency affirmative action officers to use for managers, supervisors, and other hiring authorities to provide information on potentialities of handicapped workers,

legal responsibilities, and functional ways to approach reasonable accommodation. The final package developed will be such that it can be used by other States and local units of government if they so desire.

Project Structure

Overview of Project Skill

Project skill staff developed jobs in State civil service hiring units, obtained commitments for trainee positions, set up special civil service examining procedures, and recruited eligible applicants.

Project Skill experience shows the value of providing the following supportive services:

1. Orientation for supervisors in methods for training and supervising the target population and, in some cases, assistance with the actual training.

2. Appropriate orientation for coworkers to aid in the adjustment of the trainee to the work situation.

3. Followup with both the trainee and the supervisor in the early detection and amelioration of problems that may affect successful employment.

4. Provision of job adjustment counseling.

5. Referral of trainees to other supportive and volunteer services.

Project Skill staff are housed in Madison, Wis., and provide most supportive services to trainees in the Madison area. In other areas, arrangements are made locally for provision of some or all of these services.

Staff Requirements and Duties

Director: Responsible for overall project management and direction, coordination of functions, and liaison with community and State agencies.

Job Developer: Responsible for securing civil service position commitments from State agencies, performing task analysis of committed positions, assisting personnel officers in processing positions (certification requests, announcements, training agreements, contracts, etc.), and consulting on potential job restructuring.

Trainer-Counselor: Responsible for providing technical information, liaison, and consultation to staff, supervisors, personnel officers, etc., on rehabilitation and disability-related issues. Responsible for providing training and supportive services, developing training agreements, and implementing training programs.

Trainer-Technician: Responsible for providing training to all supervisors, as well as to trainee coworkers on request of a supervisor. Responsible for training and supportive services for particular trainees. Develops and implements training programs.

Intake Counselor: Responsible for contacting referral sources; assures that necessary information is gathered on all applicants; assures that applicants are certified before competing for a position; performs intake interviews; sets up and implements oral examinations, and makes arrangements for supervisory interview of final candidates; and assures that supervisor has all vital information on individuals finally chosen for the position.

Clerical Support: Responsible for providing public information and other contact with the public; maintains and secures files; assures information flow to appropriate staff; handles processing of all correspondence and reports; and keeps track of staff travel and appointments.

Administrative Organization

The project is administratively located within the Federal Manpower Programs Section of the State Bureau of Human Resource Services in the State Department of Administration. Historically, the Federal Manpower Programs Section has administered several manpower programs targeted at State civil service employment, as well as jobs in county and city units of government.

The State Bureau of Human Resource Services and the State Bureau of Personnel are under the Division of Employee Relations. This arrangement provides greater access to the workings of the State civil service system and has been most helpful to Project Skill.

The Evolution of Subsidies for Trainee Wages

During the first 2 years of operation, Project Skill funds provided the salaries of trainees for a training period of up to 6 months. This subsidy was offered as an incentive to employers to minimize any perceived "risk" in hiring Project Skill trainees. The salaries were at the minimum wage. Subsidizing of training "wages" was discontinued on April 15, 1976, the end of the original grant period.

As is the case throughout most of the State civil service system, trainees were then hired into existing budgeted positions. They began as trainees for the classification for which they were hired, and as such their beginning wage was one salary range below the starting wage for that classification. The training period lasted a maximum of 6 months, with a raise after 3 months.

The decision to discontinue the training subsidy out of Project Skill funds was due to the fact that Project Skill trainees were able to perform at a level that was very near that of employees hired through traditional methods. Agencies, therefore, were asked to pay for this productivity. This also provided a test of the Project Skill model with a reduced budgetary outlay.

Experience without subsidy has shown that agencies will hire Project Skill trainees in regular, budgeted positions. However, job development becomes more difficult. Subsidy

during the training period is the ideal situation, and those seeking to replicate the Project Skill model should explore sources of funds for this purpose. Although not absolutely essential to the operation of the project, subsidies have been found to be helpful.

The Evolution of Project Skill Training

The first Project Skill trainees, a group of 15 building maintenance helper trainees, began in the summer of 1974. The project plan at that time was for Project Skill staff to be involved in actual "hands on" training of trainees and as the trainees reached a minimum level of competence, they were to be moved into job openings.

After initial experience with the first group of trainees, the onsite supervisors began providing the actual training with technical assistance and support from Project Skill staff. This change was made because Project Skill staff could not duplicate the job knowledge of the actual supervisors for the variety of jobs that would be filled. Also, employers preferred to do their own training, which decreased the necessity for retraining. Experience has shown that with assistance from Project Skill staff, supervisors can train handicapped persons to be effective employees.

Relationships with Other Agencies

Because Project Skill served as an intermediary between mentally or emotionally handicapped persons and the State of Wisconsin as an employer, it needed the cooperation of many different agencies and groups in order to succeed. All such groups were identified during the planning for the project. Their support was enlisted, and cooperative arrangements were made. Care was taken at all stages to keep these groups informed and involved.

Project Skill has worked closely with the following:

- Governor's Office
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Division of Mental Hygiene
- State Bureau of Personnel
- State agency personnel offices
- Wisconsin Association for Retarded Citizens
- Governor's Committee on Employment of Person with Disabilities
- Rehabilitation facilities
- Affirmative action units.

Advisory Board

An important avenue for establishing and maintaining community linkages is the establishment of an advisory board. The advisory board can provide outside guidance for policies and procedures and help communicate what is being done. The Project Skill Advisory Board has provided essential advice and support.

The following constituencies were represented on the Project Skill Advisory Board:

- Project Skill trainees
- State Manpower Council
- State Job Service
- State Division of Mental Hygiene
- State Bureau of Personnel
- State AFL-CIO
- State Bureau of Mental Retardation
- Jewish Vocational Service
- Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped
- Monroe County Opportunities Industrialization Center
- U.S. Civil Service Commission
- University of Wisconsin Rehabilitation Research Institute
- University of Wisconsin-Stout, Materials Development Center
- Madison Association for Retarded Citizens.

Publicity

It is important, especially when a new program is initiated, that the public be effectively informed of the goals and structure of the project. Project Skill's public information resources included:

—A 16 mm film used during presentations to community groups describing the project.

—Presentations to community groups, such as Association for Retarded Citizens and professional organizations, such as the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Association.

—Newspaper articles (one featuring a Project Skill trainee) describing the impact of employment on a trainee's life.

—Radio and television talk shows and short spots.

—Brochures highlighting the purposes of the project.

Results

General

Wisconsin State agencies have responded to Project Skill and 105 persons have been placed—65 having been diagnosed as mentally retarded and 40 as restored emotionally ill. Among the positions filled were building maintenance helpers (janitors), laborers, clerical workers (general clerical and typists), food service workers, and laundry workers. Over half of the positions were building maintenance helpers (61); the next largest category was clerical workers (20). Placements were made in 16 State agencies; the majority were in the Department of Administration (39) and the Department of Health and Social Services (33).

The wage level of Project Skill jobs has been one of the keys of the project's success and has been a major factor in the rehabilitation of the trainees. For example, the base salaries for the two largest Project Skill job categories were $3.83 per hour for building maintenance helpers and $3.09 for clerical workers. The average hourly wage for all Project Skill hires was $3.50 per hour.

It was also found that Project Skill trainees stay on the job after placement. Of the 105 persons hired, 65 percent were still on the job after 1 year and 10 months. Two other findings regarding retention on the job are also significant:

1. Only five persons have left their jobs after completing the training period of up to 6 months. This shows the importance of supportive services during the first few months of employment. Also, any losses in training time and salaries spent on trainees who were not going to be retained were kept to a minimum.

2. There was little difference in the retention rates of the two target groups served. Approximately 67 percent of the hires who were emotionally disturbed were retained, as were 63 percent of the restored emotionally ill.

Cost-Benefit

What were the costs of Project Skill? When dollars and cents figures were applied to the benefits to the public of the program and compared with the costs of operation, it was shown that $0.63 of every dollar expended was returned. This analysis included figures from the first 2 years of the project's operation. Costs included the entire budgetary outlay for that period. Benefits included payments trainees had received during the year prior to being hired through Project Skill from such sources as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), General Relief, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Social Security. State and Federal taxes paid by the trainees for the first year of employment were also included.

Comments from Supervisors

Another indication of Project Skill's success is seen in the comments of supervisors who have hired Project Skill trainees:

"The attendance has been very, very good. It is probably better than normal attendance, and they certainly have shown a great deal of interest and are pretty 'gung-ho.' They've gotten along very, very well [with other employees]. There is no distinction between the two different types. I think the program is a success. I'm amazed that it would start out this well. I assumed when we started this program that it would be a paying proposition. I didn't realize that it would be so soon."

—Chief of the Material Handling Department, Federal Surplus Property Program, State Department of Administration

(The Federal Surplus Property Program has eight laborers and one stock clerk hired through Project Skill.)

"Productivity in our operation is a very exacting measure. Each position has very definite scheduled duties, they have very definite time limits to adhere to. All the people in any program go into a vacant permanent position. They have to perform the duties, fulfill the scheduled requirements and their ratings are based on their performance. Their [Project Skill trainees] performances have in some cases exceeded the regular employees; then in other cases they have been somewhat lower, but in all cases without any exception they have been acceptable."

—Deputy Chief of Property Management, Department of Administration

(The Property Management office has hired 15 building maintenance helpers through Project Skill.)

"When compared to regular workers she [Project Skill trainee] is an average worker. I would consider her an excellent trainee. Her attendance and punctuality are right on the ball every time."

—Supervisor, State Microfilm Lab

(The microfilm lab has hired a graphic reproduction aide through Project Skill.)

"The overall performance has been quite outstanding for the majority of the Project Skill trainees. I think we have had good success with the program."

—Custodial Supervisor, Wilson Street State Office Building

"We hired a Project Skill trainee as a full-time Xerox operator, not with trepidation or prejudice but with some mental reservation, the reason being the pressures to which the Xerox operator is subjected. As supervisor of an employee from Project Skill, I can strongly recommend the program and, if the occasion arose, I would not hesitate to hire additional individuals at any level."

—Administrative Assistant, Public Service Commission

"Frankly, I don't think we were lucky. I feel that the process used was effective in producing a dedicated performer. I'm not going to make a series of grandiose statements about this clerk. Instead I will limit my remarks to a few factual phrases: Learns and retains, follows instructions well, completes all assigned duties in good time frames, establishes priorities, uses all free time in self-development programs, attendance and punctuality is above reproach, adheres to all rules and regulations religiously. All I can say now is thanks for a good clerk trainee."

—Assistant Project Director, Work Incentive (WIN) Program

"I have recently hired the fifth Project Skill employee within the last 10 months. Three of them have successfully completed their training in the receiving and issuance section and have been placed in permanent budgeted positions. Without exception, all five have shown average to excellent results in quality and quantity of work accomplished, in attitude, cooperation, attendance, and punctuality. The acceptance of these employees by their coworkers is excellent. This project has been a huge success. I certainly hope it will continue."

—Chief, Receiving and Issuance Section, Department of Transportation

JOB DEVELOPMENT

Job development, a key to the success of Project Skill, was the process by which permanent State civil service job openings were obtained. It involved persuading civil service hiring authorities to utilize the project as a source for filling some appropriate vacancies. Job development was the major responsibility of the Project Skill job developer.

Gaining Support

Aided by an Executive order from the Governor of Wisconsin that mandated affirmative action for the handicapped, Project Skill began soliciting job commitments from top agency administrators. The success of the first trainees provided some concrete examples for use in further promoting the project.

After gaining top level support, the project focused on gaining support from all levels of personnel involved in hiring decisions, particularly agency personnel officers. Their support was gained through periodic contact by the job developer, either by telephone or in person. These contacts helped personnel officers to think about current job openings that would be appropriate to commit to Project Skill.

Agency affirmative action officers were also useful contacts. Once convinced of the project's viability, they became important allies in persuading their agencies to commit positions to the project. Many affirmative action officers screen all of their agencies' job openings to insure that affirmative action recruitment policies are being followed. In this screening process they often contacted the job developer with leads for possible position commitments.

It soon became clear that the probability of a successful placement was enhanced greatly if the supervisor of a position committed to Project Skill was convinced about the value of the project. Job development contacts were also made with State agency supervisors, usually at the suggestion of the agency personnel officer. If supervisors could be sold on the program, they would often request that Project Skill be used when they were ready to fill other vacancies.

Tools, Techniques, and Selling Points

Information on Job Openings

The project's close organizational relationship to the State Bureau of Personnel proved useful in obtaining opportunities for developing jobs. Listings of job classifications within each agency were obtained as well as information on the number of annual vacancies within each classification. This enabled emphasis and priority on units that were likely to have open positions which could be filled. Coupled with a monthly listing of job openings from the Bureau of Personnel, this allowed staff to make timely contacts with personnel officers and supervisors who had appropriate job openings.

Promotional Tools

Various promotional tools were used to make contacts with potential employers. They included a brochure that explained the project and its benefits (updated periodically to emphasize results); a film about the project that could be used for group promotional efforts; and a sales presentation that included pictures of Project Skill trainees on the job.

Selling Points

In the early stages of the project, the findings of previous research on employment success and characteristics of our target population were used. For example, the project emphasized to potential employers that:

1. Some studies have shown that persons who are mentally retarded possess high degrees of clerical aptitude, mechanical aptitude, dexterity, and other types of skills.

2. In occupations ordinarily showing a high degree of turnover, qualified workers who are mentally retarded tend to excel.

3. Their attendance records usually are better than average, and accident and loss rates are lower.

Data on the results of Project Skill became an effective selling point. Information on numbers and types of placements in each agency, retention rates (which for some job categories were higher than for non-Project Skill hires), testimonials from supervisors of project trainees, and cost-benefit ratios showing that the program was cost-efficient in reducing expenditures of public money were extremely useful.

Pointing out the services provided by Project Skill also served to persuade hiring authorities to use the project as a hiring resource. It was emphasized that through intensive recruiting candidates who were capable of doing the job would be found. Agencies were informed that Skill staff could help them move the required paperwork through the civil service system, as well as assist in preparing and conducting the civil service examination. It was also stressed that staff were available at the final interviews for consultation and advice, and that followthrough, including counseling and referral to supportive services, would be provided for the particular applicant hired. The fact that coworker and supervisory training was provided by Skill staff was also reassuring to the prospective employer. Many of the apprehensions of hiring authorities were overcome when they learned from the job development efforts that the services of staff that were experienced in working with the target population were available.

Another selling point that became a greater factor in developing jobs for Project Skill was an Executive order issued by the Governor of Wisconsin that mandated affirmative action for the handicapped. This order called for all State agencies to implement affirmative action programs for persons with disabilities. Executive Order 86 (October 7, 1974) was strengthened by Executive Order 9 (March 26, 1976), which further defined agencies' roles in this regard. The content of this mandate was carefully reviewed with agencies. Recent Federal regulations that define the affirmative action requirements of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 brought renewed interest by State agencies in hiring the handicapped.

Project Skill made a point of informing agencies that it could be an important resource in their affirmative action efforts for persons who are handicapped.

Cementing the Commitment

Once an agency agreed to commit a position to Project Skill, definite followup procedures were followed to ensure that the position would be filled in an efficient and timely manner, that civil service procedures were followed, and that referral sources would have adequate information to base referrals on.

These procedures were:

Letter of Intent—When an agreement to commit a position to Project Skill was reached between an agency and the job developer, the hiring authority was asked to send a memorandum to the project confirming the intention to hire through Project Skill. This procedure was instituted to alleviate any possible misunderstanding that might occur.

Job Analysis—For each position committed to Project Skill, an individualized, onsite job analysis was done by the job developer. The supervisor of the position was interviewed and the job broken down into specific tasks and duties. The work environment was observed in order to provide an indication of the psychological climate of the job. For example, answers to the following questions were sought: What would be the degree of interaction with coworkers or the public? What would be the nature of the supervision? What were the attitudes of the supervisor? The information gained from the job analysis was used to assist referral sources and the Project Skill intake specialist in making decisions as to whether an individual would be an appropriate referral for the position.

In the case of positions for which the availability of qualified applicants was uncertain, a preliminary check was made with referral sources. If qualified applicants were not available, the agency was informed that the vacancy could not be filled by Project Skill at that time. This rarely happened, however. On one occasion, after a job analysis was done, it was decided that the position involved too much pressure and would not be appropriate for Project Skill. This was then explained to the agency and was seen by them as evidence of the project's careful screening procedures.

Job Description—A detailed job description was prepared from information gained through the job analysis. The job description included information (such as the psychological environment of the job) that went beyond what was ordinarily in a civil service job announcement and was used as a tool by referral sources in initial screening of potential applicants.

Job Announcement—The formal civil service job announcement was prepared by the Project Skill job developer. The project prepared the announcement to insure that the specialized wording necessary for Project Skill was included. The additions to the usual announcement format are as follows:

1. The job title needed to include the designation "Trainee," "Exceptional Employment," and "Project Skill." The "Exceptional Employment" designation refers to the fact that applications would only be accepted from persons in the Project Skill target group.

2. The following special requirement was also included as part of the announcement:

> SPECIAL REQUIREMENT: Pursuant to Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter Personnel 27 and in accordance with the State of Wisconsin Affirmative Action Policy to assist occupation-

ally handicapped groups, appointment consideration will be given only to applicants diagnosed (or certified) as mentally retarded (mildly or borderline retarded) or as emotionally handicapped.

Project Skill Agreement—For each position committed to Project Skill, an agreement was worked out between the project and the employing agency. This agreement defined the terms of the job commitment and spelled out the responsibilities of both parties for the duration of the training period and the subsequent probationary period.

The agreement included the following elements:

1. The scope of the agreement; a short statement on the purpose of the agreement.
2. A general statement on the purpose of Project Skill.
3. A definition of the training period.
4. The trainee's salary and expected salary progression.
5. The procedures for recruitment and selection of trainees.
6. A statement about how trainees would be certified as eligible for Project Skill.
7. A listing of the Project Skill reporting requirements. (The basic requirements were that the agency would provide the project with copies of all personnel transactions involving the trainee, such as the letters sent to the trainee notifying him/her of starting employment, probationary status, permanent civil service status, and termination, if necessary.)
8. The specific information on the position or positions committed, such as job title, number of positions, starting wage, and hours of work.
9. The signatures of the Project Skill director and an agency representative, usually the personnel officer.

Job Restructuring and Accommodation—Job restructuring, or rearranging the job duties of two or more positions to make a position that would include only duties that could be performed by the target population, was not done by Project Skill. The positions committed were such that, with proper recruitment, they could be filled without altering basic job descriptions. This proved to be valuable because job restructuring was seen by supervisors as a complicated and disrupting procedure.

RECRUITMENT AND INTAKE

The purpose of recruitment and intake was to provide employers with trainees who could, with proper training and support, meet the minimum requirements of the job for which they were selected.

The elements of this process were: (1) Recruitment; (2) pre-screening; (3) civil service examination; and (4) final selection.

Recruitment

Recruitment in Project Skill was limited to persons diagnosed by a developmental disabilities or mental health professional as either mildly mentally retarded or restored emotionally ill. Limited recruitment of this type is allowed under the Wisconsin civil service system and is authorized by the Wisconsin Administrative Code (Rules of the Director of the Bureau of Personnel).

In order to reach the target population, staff must develop referral sources. All agencies and persons who work with the mildly mentally retarded and/or restored emotionally ill were contacted as potential referral sources for Project Skill. They are listed below:

1. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (most referrals came from this source);

2. Rehabilitation facilities (i.e., Goodwill Industries, Opportunities Industrialization Centers, etc.);

3. Association for Retarded Citizens;

4. Mental health centers;

5. Special education counselors and teachers in high schools and vocational schools;

6. State Job Service (employment service) offices, including the Work Incentive (WIN) Program; and

7. Other special programs that serve the target groups.

When the project began, meetings were held with all referral sources to explain the project and answer questions about referral criteria and procedures. Ongoing contact and dialogue with referral sources were necessary to prevent misunderstandings. For example, misunderstandings can occur regarding the characteristics of an appropriate referral or what background information about referrals is needed.

Referrals to Project Skill occurred in two ways:

1. Referrals were sent to Project Skill whenever the referral source had a person who might qualify for an opening that Project Skill might develop in the future. This provided a pool of applicants from which Project Skill could draw.

2. Other referrals were solicited by Project Skill in response to a specific job announcement. When Project Skill received a specific position commitment, a job announcement was sent to all referral sources. They then provided Project Skill with referrals of persons who would be appropriate for the position prior to the deadline date of the job announcement.

Both kinds of referrals were important. Having a pool of applicants allowed the project to respond with assurance when prospective employers questioned whether qualified applicants were available for a particular job classification. It is important, however, that applicants' expectations are not raised too high. They need to understand that there are no guarantees that a job will be developed that they could qualify for and that assurances cannot be given as to how long the wait might be before applicants are notified of an opening.

Even with a pool of applicants, it was essential to continue sending announcements of each opening to referral sources and not rely solely on files. The announcements prompted the referral sources to refer persons that they had not referred earlier, either because additional clients had recently come to them or they had not previously considered Project Skill.

Prescreening

Prescreening for Project Skill consisted of two elements: (1) Collecting information about the applicant that would be useful in evaluating his/her suitability for particular Project Skill job openings and in working with the individual after

he/she is hired; and (2) conducting a prescreening interview.

Collecting Information

Referral sources assisted the applicant in completing the following:

1. A State of Wisconsin Application for Employment. (It was especially important that this form was done neatly and completely, as it became the initial contact document for prospective employers.)

2. A Project Skill Application Form. (This form provided the project with needed information not included on the State application.)

3. A Release of Information Form. (This enabled the project to obtain further needed information not available through the referral source.)

The referral source also provided Project Skill with a *certification of disability*. This form was completed by a qualified person within the referral agency using medical, psychiatric, and other diagnostic information. The certification was necessary as documentation that applicants were from the targeted population.

Although the original certification served the purpose of establishing a statement of eligibility, in some cases certain applicants and trainees proved to be unready for the training program. Therefore, referral sources were asked to add the following statement: "The applicant is willing and able to enter the Project Skill training program, and can be expected to adequately tolerate the stress of full-time employment."

In addition, it is important for the referral source to provide copies of all pertinent medical, diagnostic, and evaluation material that they can legally pass on. This includes physical capacities reports, psychological evaluations, rehabilitation facilities reports, and reports from vocational assessment centers. Reports can be helpful in many ways, e.g., a physical examination could indicate certain physical limitations such as restricted ability to stand for over an hour; a psychological evaluation might list a relatively low reading level of 2.6 grade yet state that there is evidence that the applicant can learn an unskilled job through oral instruction and demonstration; a vocational-work adjustment progress summary could give evidence that the applicant has reached a near-competitive level of work performance and job adjustment. When other types of evaluative material are old or incomplete, the referral source must provide its own impressions and recommendations.

Prescreening Interview

A prescreening interview was held with each person who applied for a Project Skill job. In this interview, the project was explained to the applicant. It also served to put him/her at ease and gain any additional needed information on interests, skills, past experiences, and other conditions that must be taken into consideration in job placement. For example, information listed on the State application's work history and other training sections was often incomplete concerning vocational assessment, work adjustment, and training. Transportation should be discussed with the applicant so that adequate arrangements can be made to insure that the trainee gets to and from work.

The prescreening interview also served as a "dress rehearsal" for the more formal oral evaluation that was to occur later. It gave clues to the applicant's verbal skills, cooperativeness, stress tolerance, and interest in the particular opening for which she/he was being considered. If it appeared that the applicant had been inappropriately referred for a position, this fact was discussed with the referral source. The referral source then discussed the situation with the applicant. Applicants who insisted on going through with the civil service examination were allowed to do so if they met the minimum eligibility requirements for the job. This situation rarely occurred in any explicit way; when it did, the chances were the applicant was ranked relatively low.

Civil Service Examination

The next step in the intake process was a civil service examination. The most typical type of examination was an *oral evaluation*, in which a panel of two or three persons interviewed the candidates. Questions were tailored to the job being examined for, and the same questions were asked of each applicant. Each applicant was then given a numerical civil service score. Applicants were ranked on such factors as past work experience and training, attitude toward and understanding of the job, and personal characteristics such as stress tolerance or health limitations. The evaluation factors are listed in more detail on the Applicant Evaluation Sheet. Project Skill staff usually served as members of the oral evaluation panel, although participation by representatives of the employing agency was encouraged.

Written tests or *performance evaluations* were also used when Project Skill and/or the hiring agency considered them to be important selection factors. These were usually appropriate modifications of existing tests, devised in cooperation with the State Bureau of Personnel.

A civil service examination given for a Project Skill position often resulted in the establishment of a civil service *register*. Exam scores and rankings are valid for 6 months for other job openings in the same job classification with the use of registers. A record of the registers, with names and expiration dates, was kept by the Intake Counselor. Procedures for filling any position covered by a register then entailed certification of eligible names from the register and scheduling these people for a job interview, a considerably less complex process. Establishment of a register eliminated repeating the time-consuming steps of job announcement, recruitment, screening, and oral examination for every job filled.

A feature of the Wisconsin Personnel Rule that allows recruitment to be limited to a target group is *category certification*. Category certification expands the number of applicants who are certified to an employer as eligible for a particular position from the usual three to a minimum of five. In this system the categories are: Category I—scores of 90-100; Category II—85-89; Category III—80-84; etc., with above 70 considered passing. In the situation where one vacancy exists, the top category is certified. If this does not yield five applicants, additional categories are certified until at least five applicants are eligible for the position. For example: If on a particular exam three people had scores between 90 and 100 and four people had scores between 85 and 89, seven people would be eligible to be interviewed by the hiring authority.

Category certification had a positive effect on Project Skill in two ways. First, employers were more confident that they would get an acceptable candidate if they had more persons to select from. Second, it allowed more Project Skill applicants to feel "successful" by being selected for the final interview.

Final Selection and Feedback

When the civil service register was established, it was the employing unit's responsibility to contact Project Skill applicants for the final selection interviews. The hiring decision rested with the employer. A Project Skill staff person—usually the intake counselor—was present at the final interviews. A familiar face and moral support for applicants helped put them at ease so that they could do their best.

The Project Skill staff person also served as a consultant to the employer, interpreting strengths and weaknesses, and alerting supervisors and agency representatives to potential problems. For example, physical disabilities or medications that could affect the work assignment were explained—as was the general category of disability (retardation or emotional disturbance)—in nontechnical terms. When a final selection was made this information was transmitted to the Project Skill trainer who would be working with the agency and the trainee. The actual training process then began.

A thread running through the entire recruitment and intake process (and, indeed, the entire project) has been the need for constant communication with, and feedback to, the referral sources. They (the referral sources) need to be informed about the applicant's performance in the pre-screening, oral exam, and final interviews. This gives the referral sources valuable information that can be used in their continuing rehabilitation efforts with the individual. For example, if the applicant's interviewing skills are not good, the referral source can set up a program to improve them. In this way all applicants to Project Skill received a service, whether or not they were successful in obtaining employment through Project Skill.

TRAINING

Training includes activities that focus on the pretraining and training processes. These activities include providing information, instruction, and discussion sessions for trainees, coworkers, supervisors, training directors, personnel managers, administrators, project staff, and referral agency personnel.

The material in this chapter of the report is based on 2½ year's experience with the project. Some procedures have worked well, others have not. The general conclusion is that particular schedules and relationships can be varied somewhat with individual situations. In all situations, however, the following seem to be necessary:

1. Understanding by all key persons of their responsibilities.
2. An effective communication system.

Skill Training

Skill training (the formal or semiformal instruction in task procedures) is necessary to teach the trainee accepted ways of doing the job.

Adjustment

Adjustment refers to the acquisition of acceptable behavior for the work setting—"fitting in" and "getting along." The trainee's behavior reflects attitudes about himself/herself, the work, coworkers, and supervisors. Without a reasonably positive approach, the trainee—despite the learning of skills—may well resign in discouragement or be terminated by the employer.

Purpose of Training

Orientation

Orientation involves familiarizing individuals with facts about the trainee and the training program. Orientation is necessary so everyone who is in a position to influence training progress has the information needed to make wise judgments regarding the project and his/her role in it. For example:

> An administrator needs to know general goals of the project in relationship to affirmative action mandates.
>
> A personnel manager needs to know an applicant's job potential to decide if he/she can fulfill the position requirements.
>
> A trainee needs to know work rules if he/she is expected to follow them.

Orientation/Training

Administrators

Top agency administrators should be informed about the program by letter from the project administrators. Follow-through meetings are then arranged. The actual orientation of agency or unit staff (when supported by the administrator), gives backing to the project and lets the employing unit staff realize that administrative support is given to the program. It may be desirable to have the administrator give a preliminary statement at an orientation meeting. Here is what was done at one institution:

An initial agreement was made between the administrator and the project job developer to hire a trainee. Since this was the first trainee in this setting and there was considerable apprehension among staff, it was agreed that a meeting of a representative of administration, personnel, training, and supervisors would be held, with project staff presenting dimensions of the program and answering questions. A 1-hour session was held that included the showing of the film about the project, an introduction by the employer's training director, and a presentation of about 10 minutes each from the

project job developer and trainer. A question and answer session followed for about a half hour during which several issues were raised concerning the ability level of the trainees, special conditions such as whether trainees can have more days off than regular employees, and the roles of supervisors and project staff. The session served to provide information and to air out some of the concerns of employing unit staff.

Personnel Managers

Orientation of personnel managers begins with the contact by the job developer, who might be accompanied by a trainer. Not only a description of the overall program but discussion of potential trainees and their abilities and needs is important to the personnel managers' understanding of and cooperation with the project. The personnel manager may decide that the appropriate approach in his/her setting would be to have a formal orientation such as the example described above. Coworker orientation may be decided upon after discussion with individual supervisors. The personnel manager may decide that certain supervisors are more likely to be helpful and proficient at training than other supervisors.

Supervisors

Semiformal training program. Early in Project Skill's implementation, staff and the Advisory Board recognized that a specific structure was needed to help supervisors more effectively train persons who are mildly retarded or restored emotionally disturbed. They felt that a training program was needed to dramatize for supervisors the need for training, clear instructions, and a positive work climate for *all* employees, both handicapped and nonhandicapped. They also felt the training program should include practical suggestions for training the mentally handicapped.

One result was the devising of a *Supervisor Training Manual*[1] that the trainer/technician used in a number of settings. The following outline, in modified form, describes the format of the 2-hour group sessions for supervisors:

1. Introduction of leader and group members; definitions of purpose.

2. Project Skill film and sharing of comments about trainee progress from supervisors who have already trained Project Skill participants.

3. Exercises

   — Timed test followed by discussion of how trainees react to pressure, how intense pressure might interfere with productive work performance (anxiety arousal), and how a trainer might lessen this anxiety.

   — Towel-folding exercise, illustrating individual approaches to a particular task (different ways of folding), and consequently, the need for step-by-step planned training for proper learning to occur. This is related to supervisory responsibility.

   — Directions taking exercise, where the group follows verbal directions for typing an underwriter's knot. This illustrates that pace and clarity are important in giving directions. The nonhandicapped can usually absorb from three to six simple instructions before confusion begins. This is an opportunity to emphasize that Project Skill trainees may take longer to learn the task(s) to be performed. Past experience has shown that trainees can learn and can reach an acceptable level of productivity. This goal is reached by establishing a consistent training program.

   — Role playing, where a supervisor teaches the underwriter's knot to a new employee. This provides an opportunity to discuss specific ways to simplify communication and effect learning.

4. Discussion of learning principles and lecture on components of training.

Specific information regarding individual trainees. Supervisors want very specific guidelines regarding the handling of their trainees. Although general orientation is important, specific information regarding the trainee is essential to the supervisor for helping in the training process. The following information should be given to supervisors:

1. An explanation of the trainee's physical disabilities that might affect the work assignment. For example, epilepsy, even though well controlled, should be discussed. It is important for the supervisor to know about the medication and what to do if a seizure should occur.

2. A statement about the trainee's general category of disability, e.g., retardation or emotional disturbance. The focus should be on specific behavioral components: e.g., "somewhat slower in learning new tasks than the average person," or "needs matter-of-fact praise, fairly frequently, in the beginning of training."

The following types of information should *not* be given to supervisors:

1. Diagnostic categories, e.g., schizophrenia or passive aggressive personality. Generally, these labels tend to cause fear or confusion among supervisors. There is a misunderstanding of the meaning of these terms and generally a self-fulfilling prophecy may operate where poor behavior is expected. It is better to explain certain likely behavioral components and suggest measures the supervisor might take, e.g., "if the trainee tends to isolate himself/herself, make *gradual* efforts to talk to him/her and include him/her in group discussions," or, "the trainee responds best if he/she knows that not phoning when ill will result in loss of pay."

2. Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.). Mere knowledge of an I.Q. score often results in arbitrary exclusion from certain tasks or discussions and leaves out of consideration the individual adaptive ability of the trainee. It is better to tell the

[1] *Supervisor Training Manual*, April 1975. Available from Project Skill headquarters in Madison.

supervisor, e.g., "Joe can learn the schedule best if you go over any new assignment with him several times, having him repeat it, prior to his beginning the task. Check on his work about each hour the first night, and ease up gradually from then on."

The principle Project Skill has followed has been to give information that is useful, necessary, or helpful because it is directly related to the training success.

Coworker Training and Orientation

Soon after the supervisory training started, the project staff became aware, through feedback from supervisors, that coworkers were beginning to question this special training. To respond to these questions and to strengthen commitment to the project, Skill staff designed a coworker training program to be a complement to the program provided for supervisors. In both cases, the training was designed to provide information on the capabilities of the population and insights into ways to respond to potential situations that might arise during training.

Coworker training was first instituted at one of the State's residential institutions when it became clear that one of the Skill trainees was receiving hostile teasing from coworkers. With the support of the department administrator, coworker training was introduced.

Coworker training was a modification of the supervisory training. The following agenda was often used:

1. Introduce group and discuss the roles of trainees, coworkers, and supervisors, and their relationship to each other.

2. Then follow same sequence as for supervisory training up to the role playing of giving instructions for the underwriter's knot. The second half of the training can utilize:
   a. Climate exercise
   b. Word game

3. The session can then be concluded with specific information on the structure and purpose of the project itself.

The orientation of coworkers was at the discretion of the supervisor, personnel manager, and the project trainer. Some supervisors prefer to say nothing to their staff other than, "This is Joe Brown, who will be a trainee in the maintenance department." This may suffice. Other supervisors wanted an orientation for coworkers because of some apprehension about special programs or about handicapped persons. All orientations should be made known to the trainee, especially those for coworkers.

In one instance, the agency administrator, training director, and personnel manager thought that coworker orientation would be absolutely necessary. These three management representatives, together with the trainee's coworkers, met with the project job developer and a project trainer before the trainee started the new job. The film was shown, introductory remarks were made by the training director, and brief presentations were given by the project job developer and trainer. Considerable feelings were expressed, pro and con, toward the project by the coworkers. Some coworkers were upset because, as they stated, "If a retarded person can do my job, what does that say about me?" This concern is difficult to respond to, but some of the answers given were:

> "Everyone does not choose to or is able to use all his [her] ability on a job."
>
> "If one has more ability, he [she] can move up to a higher level job."

It was emphasized that trainees were hired at less than the usual pay rate, but were expected eventually to work up to a satisfactory level of performance and achieve regular status and pay rate. Another issue was whether trainees would pay their "fair share" of union dues. The answer was "yes." A few coworkers rose to the defense of the "handicapped" saying, "I know they need a chance," or, "I believe they can do the work." The session served somewhat as a catharsis for coworker rumblings and did provide information. It also prevented disputes between trainees and "regular" employees and possible disruption of the work situation.

Trainees

Trainees are usually first informed about the training program from a referral agency counselor, who has some general background about the project. When a specific job is open, the referral agency counselor can offer some detail about job tasks, wages, hours, title, and location of the job. This information is given to the referral counselor by the project's intake worker.

Next, the trainee meets with the project intake counselor (in Madison, at the project headquarters; outstate, at the referral agency) who provides further information about the program, job goals, and objectives.

The purpose of these preceding interviews is to give the trainee some of the facts about the job and to discuss some of the implications the job would have for him/her. For example, the receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance may well be terminated after up to 9 months of employment. At the civil service oral evaluation, the trainee will state his/her knowledge of the job being applied for.

The function of training in the Project Skill job is to teach the trainee the individual methods and procedures the supervisor requires and to help him/her adjust to the work situation. There have been three training models to assist the trainee:

1. Preliminary training by project staff. For the first groups of trainees early in the project, preliminary training sessions were held. Placement staff provided orientation speakers from the union, safety program, and personnel. Instruction, demonstration, the tryout of tasks, and role playing of trainee/coworker and trainee/supervisor relationships were included. After a week or two, the trainees were assigned to their regular supervisor.

This format, except for the personnel orientation, was discontinued when it was discovered that most applicants' previous training, skills, and adjustments were at least

minimally sufficient to enable them to train at the regular worksite.

2. Preliminary training by employing unit training staff. Two employing units had a preliminary training program for their "regular" workers that was also given to Project Skill trainees.

- Preliminary training for building maintenance helpers: For the first groups of trainees, the formal training outline was followed. However, it was discovered that many trainees had trouble adjusting to their regular work setting after getting used to the preliminary training site. The modification effected was to retain the personnel and work rule orientation in formal sessions, but to curtail the extent of the preliminary work demonstrations. Trainees were then transferred to the worksite itself. The unit trainer then acted as a consultant to the supervisor. This format seemed to work more effectively.
- Preliminary training for nursing assistant (employing unit training officer): One institution used a formal 6- to 8-week training program of classroom instruction, lectures, audiovisual aids, and gradually increasing job tryouts. Written examinations were given at midtraining and at the end. Currently, a Project Skill trainee has progressed through formal training sequence along with six or so other "regular" trainees.

3. Training by supervisor from first day of training. In a large percentage of the training sites, trainees are turned over to the supervisor for training from the date of hire. A member of the personnel department or Project Skill staff introduces the trainee to the supervisor. (Usually, the trainee first meets the supervisor at the final interview when the decision to hire is made.) An orientation from the personnel department is always given during the first several days of employment. The trainee is given the same information as any other new employee:

- General job goals
- Work rules
- Tour and description of work area
- Use of time cards
- Hours, breaks, and lunchtime
- Safety practices and fire exits
- Introduction to coworkers and supervisors
- Health insurance
- Retirement
- Sick leave
- Vacation
- Life insurance.

These discussions between the personnel staff or supervisor and the trainee help establish the ground rules for the trainee's relationship with the supervisor. It has often been advisable for the trainee to work with a coworker at first, if possible. In any event, the trainee should know specifically where, how, and to whom to report for instructions.

Programs, Training Plans, and Reports

Programs

Several documents state the goals of the project and specify some of the responsibilities of the employer, Project Skill, and the trainee.

1. *General Training Plan:* The General Training Plan is based on requirements of the State Personnel Code. The plan outlines certain aspects of the project such as tasks to be learned, training processes, characteristics of trainee group to be served, funding source for trainees, recruitment processes, and length of training. A copy of this plan is given to each employing unit personnel office.

2. *Training and Employment Agreement:* This agreement specifies the title of the job, pay rates, time of training, and conditions of completion or termination. The agreement is signed by the trainee, the employing unit representative, and the personnel bureau representative. A copy is then received by each party to the agreement. Although the document specifies a training period of up to 6 months, the employer can advance the trainee earlier with State Bureau of Personnel approval. Also, the term of training can be extended for a period of time, usually 3 months. This additional time has rarely been necessary because after 6 months most trainees have had time to demonstrate that they can be advanced to regular probation.

3. *Training Program:* The Training Program's major components include the duration of training, pay, supervisory responsibilities such as instruction and reporting progress to the trainee and Project Skill, as well as itemizing the tasks of the job. Some items such as pay are determined by a union contract and the State Bureau of Personnel. Reporting schedules are suggested, but supervisors are allowed considerable variation in their adherence to the schedule. This document must be approved by the State Bureau of Personnel. A copy is then given to the employing unit personnel officer, supervisors, and trainees.

Specific Training Plans

The specific training plan is a description of tasks, procedures, and a timetable for learning required tasks. The plan is used by certain employing unit trainers who have a formal structure for training. The unit trainers usually implement the plan themselves or work with a supervisor to help the trainee in following the plan. Project trainers can be of assistance in working out plans to teach certain tasks or to modify behavior which is interfering with job progress.

Records/Progress Reports

In order for the supervisor to keep track of trainee progress, a record should be kept of task learning and job-related behavior. The analysis required to do justice to the trainee and provide a fair report gives the supervisor time to think about tasks accomplished and job-related factors. The trainee should be involved in the rating process through periodic discussion with the supervisor, and the trainees should sign the report to indicate they have seen it. The rating process, although useful in some training situations, is especially helpful to Project Skill trainees who are used to being assessed and evaluated as part of their past rehabilitation programs and can use the assurances and guidance of supervisors who have looked carefully at trainee progress.

Record forms have two components: (1) Task performance and (2) job-related behaviors. Tasks are rated for quantity and quality on a five-point scale. Job-related factors, such as coworker relationships, are also rated for quality on the five-point scale. It is suggested that records be completed each week during the first month of training and every 2 weeks for the balance of training. A flexible interpretation of this schedule is desirable—most important is that the trainer/couselor is satisfied that trainee progress is being made.

Many supervisors do not like to complete reports. This reluctance can be partially overcome if the unit or project trainer or placement counselor spends some time in the beginning of training with the supervisor. During the first week(s) of training, the assigned trainer or counselor should meet with the supervisor to review his/her understanding of the rating form codes, and to discuss trainee progress. Experience has shown that some supervisors need assurance that the trainee can "stand" being evaluated, especially if some performance needs improvement. If supervisors consider reporting helpful in training a better employee, more useful and meaningful reports are forthcoming. Interest and cooperation of the assigned trainer-counselor has aided reporting. If no report is requested, reports will not flow readily. When written reports are not sent, a phone call to the supervisor can elicit an oral report, and some persuasion may help in encouraging the sending of a written report. It is good to emphasize that the main purposes of the report are to give the trainee some tangible evidence of progress, to aid the supervisor in noting progress and problem areas, and to inform the trainer of trainee needs such as counseling or other services.

Job Placement Followthrough

Who Should Follow Through?

The referral agency usually has considerable background information about the trainee and an investment of time and a relationship with the trainee that may well continue into training and beyond. The value of this knowledge for placement followthrough cannot be underestimated. It is important to establish from the beginning of training the respective roles of the referral agency and the project trainer. It is rare that too much followthrough is done or that two or more agencies outdo each other in working with the trainee and supervisor. One supervisor complained that the trainee used too much of the supervisor's time with discussion of personal problems. The supervisor said, "I'm not a professional counselor." Although supervisors often can give good advice, a careful discussion between the trainer, trainee, and supervisor will reveal whether the Skill trainer should be more involved or perhaps refer the trainee to other services so that the supervisor can maintain his/her primary role of supervision.

One primary counselor/trainer should be designated to followthrough with trainee and supervisor concerns. Reports can then be given to other appropriate individuals. The models followed so far are:

1. Project Skill trainer as the primary contact (this model is used in the project headquarters city): The project trainer has direct communication, through worksite visits and phone calls as well as receiving written reports from the supervisor. Many problems that arise can be resolved in these interchanges, e.g., a trainee's misunderstanding of supervisory job performance expectations, or a supervisor's misinterpretation of the cause of a trainee's momentary inattention that might be due to petit mal seizures. If a problem arises that cannot be resolved by the project trainer, e.g., need for psychiatric review of medication, steps are taken such as the referral of the trainee to a mental health clinic. Periodic oral reports of trainee progress are given to the referring agency.

2. Referral counselor, or followup placement counselor, as the primary contact (this model is followed especially at jobsites beyond commuting distance of the project trainer): The project trainer is responsible for arranging an introduction between the employment unit personnel office and supervisor and the referral or followup counselor. From then on, the counselor follows through with the trainee and supervisor, monitoring trainee progress. Written and oral reports of progress are routed to the Project Skill trainer. Some personnel officers want a copy of the progress reports, also. If there is a lag in the reporting, the Project Skill trainer should call the contact counselor and find out what is happening. Sometimes, it is necessary for the project trainer to travel to the worksite and meet with the trainee, supervisor, personnel, and local contact counselor.

Worksite Visits

The project trainer—or the person designated to provide followthrough in outlying areas—should be aware of the work setting, periodically tour the area and take note of the trainee's physical and social environment. Ideally, this should be done before the trainee begins work. Worksite visits demonstrate interest in the trainee's progress. However, in some settings the presence of the trainer is counterproductive.

If the trainee, supervisor, or personnel manager indicates that worksite visits are not helpful, the trainer should, nevertheless, arrange to talk with the supervisor and trainee in some other area. Often, this is done because of coworker curiosity and concern that inordinate or "special" treatment is being afforded trainees.

Visits should be geared to training needs and circumstances. Some trainees and supervisors require and welcome weekly visits for perhaps the first month. Usually, however, a visit the first and third week should suffice, with perhaps a phone call the second or fourth week. It is most important for the project trainer to follow trainee progress through visits, phone calls, and written reports. After fairly intensive initial contacts, a gradual lessening of contacts can take place. Many employing units require a 3- and 6-month report on all new employees, and this is a good time to closely monitor trainee progress. Also, a training pay increment occurs at those intervals as a partial recognition of progress. If a trainee is advanced to "regular" probation before the end of the 6-month training program, the Project Skill trainer should review progress with the trainee and supervisor and acknowledge successful completion of training. This will serve to partially reinforce trainee and supervisory efforts.

CONCLUSION

As a result of Project Skill's research and development efforts within Wisconsin State service, over 100 persons, either mentally retarded or restored emotionally disturbed, were hired into permanent civil service positions. The effort added productive, valued employees to the system, employees whose turnover rate compared favorably with employees hired through regular processes. Initial cost benefit figures also reveal a positive return on the investment.

While it is true that the model developed by Project Skill included intensive "front end" attention such as careful screening and detailed training plans in addition to other early professional attention and service (with concomitant costs), this initial effort has demonstrated its importance and value. As a result of the project, more individuals (coworkers and employers) have, by interaction and exposure, learned some graphic lessons about the potential and ability of persons about whom they may have previously held misconceptions.

It is clear that, in Wisconsin, the project will not only be continued using State funds, but the model will be expanded to encompass the entire handicapped population. The new Project Skill will be a handicapped placement and affirmative action resource for all of Wisconsin civil service. A precedent will also be set in that the ongoing program will be the joint responsibility of two departments—Health and Social Services as well as Administration. The new program will be meshed with the setting of hiring and promotion goals for persons who are handicapped in each State agency affirmative action plan. These efforts will in turn be strengthened by the promulgation of a training package now being developed through an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) grant. The package will contain the basic information needed by personnel managers and supervisors regarding handicapped affirmative action. The topics that will be developed in depth include: Legislative mandates, facts and figures about the ability of the handicapped population, reasonable accommodation—its definition, parameters—as well as a delineation of the resources available to enable hiring authorities to meet their responsibilities. The IPA project also includes an in-depth analysis of the State's Management Information System, to assure that the most workable approach is implemented to gather needed statistics on handicapped employees, applicants, and reasonable accommodations. As a first step, the State application has been modified to allow an individual to define a handicapping condition.

Further spinoffs of the project include the Skill Extension to Cities and Counties, an effort funded through 4-percent discretionary funds of the Governor's Manpower Office. Thus far, in its short existence this project has brought together various agencies at the local level into new and hopefully ongoing relationships. Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funds (Work Experience and Public Service Employment) have been used as subsidy for positions for persons who are mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed. The attention of funding sources (Area Manpower Boards) has been effectively focused on the employment and training needs of the target populations. Referral sources and service provider agencies (Community Action programs, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, local Mental Health, and Development Disabilities Boards, etc.) have not only become alert to the potential value of CETA resources for the persons they serve, but have also entered into formal cooperative relationships with the project. These new, defined processes provide for smooth, coordinated services to the consumer and have resulted in additional, substantive employment and training opportunities that did not exist previously for this population.

Project Skill has not only worked, but it has grown and gained acceptance. Given budgetary and fiscal constaints, the fact that the project has gained the support to assure its continuation under General Purpose Revenues is a major achievement. The fact that two State agencies have entered into an unprecedented effort to assure its continuation is an event worthy of special note.

It should be understood, however, that there were no special conditions unique to Wisconsin that resulted in a viable project. The conditions and the outcomes can be replicated in other jurisdictions. Over the long term, the real value of the model developed by Project Skill will be in the extent to which other States or local governments are able to adapt or adopt the methods and approaches that evolved from Project Skill. It has worked and will continue to work in Wisconsin. There is continuing concern on the part of all involved with the initial effort that other governments are able to pursue implementation of the model or adaptation of its structure to their own circumstances. This monograph has been written with that purpose in mind.

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1978 O—270-801

Where to Get More Information

For more information on this and other programs of research and development funded by the Employment and Training Administration, contact the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20213, or any of the Regional Administrators for Employment and Training whose addresses are listed below.

Location	States Served	
John F. Kennedy Bldg. Boston, Mass. 02203	Connecticut Maine Massachusetts	New Hampshire Rhode Island Vermont
1515 Broadway New York, N.Y. 10036	New Jersey New York Canal Zone	Puerto Rico Virgin Islands
P.O. Box 8796 Philadelphia, Pa. 19101	Delaware Maryland Pennsylvania	Virginia West Virginia District of Columbia
1371 Peachtree Street, NE. Atlanta, Ga. 30309	Alabama Florida Georgia Kentucky	Mississippi North Carolina South Carolina Tennessee
230 South Dearborn Street Chicago, Ill. 60604	Illinois Indiana Michigan	Minnesota Ohio Wisconsin
911 Walnut Street Kansas City, Mo. 64106	Iowa Kansas	Missouri Nebraska
Griffin Square Bldg. Dallas, Tex. 75202	Arkansas Louisiana New Mexico	Oklahoma Texas
1961 Stout Street Denver, Colo. 80294	Colorado Montana North Dakota	South Dakota Utah Wyoming
450 Golden Gate Avenue San Francisco, Calif. 94102	Arizona California Hawaii Nevada	American Samoa Guam Trust Territory
909 First Avenue Seattle, Wash. 98174	Alaska Idaho	Oregon Washington